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National identity: who are the Albanians? the Illyrian anthroponymy and the ethnogenesis of the Albanians

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Abstract: Research problem: The Albanian ethnogenesis and national identity framed by the "Illyrian" theory of Albanian ethnical and cultural origin and the main possible political consequences of the implementation of the "Illyrian" theory of Albanian ethnogenesis, accepted firstly by the national awakening movement of the Albanians (1878–1913) called "Rilindja", i.e., the renaissance. Methodology: Analysis and comparison of different historical sources, scientific literature and ideologically-propaganda works by distinct and opposite authors of different ethnical and educational backgrounds.

Keywords: Albanians, Balkans, National Identity, Nationalism, Ethnogenesis, Illyrians

1. Introduction

On the first place we must be clear about what the autochthony, anthroponymy and ethnogenesis of the Albanians mean. Actually, it is a question: have the Albanians been living uninterruptedly on the present-day "ethnical" territories of the Albanians (Albania, the Eastern Montenegro, Kosovo and Metohija, the Southern Central Serbia, the Western Macedonia and the Northern Epirus) since the ancient Greek and Roman times or not? In the other words, are the Albanians really the indigenous people of the Balkans as they claim or just the newcomers to their present-day ethnical territories? True, the question of Illyrian ethnic and cultural background of the present-day Albanians (i.e., the ethnogenesis of the Albanians) has been politicized in the recent period. The question is related both to the ancient history of the Albanians and to the pre-history of their language.

For some German and Austrian 19th century linguists and historians it was evident that the Albanians were autochthonous population in Albania since pre-Greco-Roman times. It means that these scholars accepted the theory that the 19th century Albanian nation had direct ethnical continuity from the autochthonous Balkan people – the ancient Illyrians. For Albanian scientists it is incontestable that not only cultural, but also, ethnic continuity exists between the ancient Illyrians and the present-day Albanians. Many of the 20th century scholars, especially after the Second World War, however, have quite opposite opinion for the very scientific reason: the theory of Illyrian origin of the Albanians is not supported by any single historical source! They claim that the Albanians are not native Balkan population as they are newcomers to the present-day Albania from more or less distant regions. Two main arguments for this hypothesis or theory are: 1) the Dacian-Albanian-Romanian linguistic connections; and 2) the place-names in Albania, which indicate a lack of Illyrian-Albanian continuity. Nevertheless, the second approach to the question of Albanian ethnogenesis, i.e. that the Albanians are the newcomers to the Balkan Peninsula who came later in comparison to all Albanian neighbors, is backed by several historical sources.

2. The Science of Albanology and Political Claims

The interest of European scholars, primarily German and Austrian, in research of Albanian ethnical origin rose gradually during the second half of the 19th century.[1] Their

[1] The question of Albanian ethnogenesis was firstly examined by Johan Thunmann (1746−1778) in 1774 (*Research on history of the East European peoples*, Leipzig) and Johan Georg von Hahn (1811−1869) in

interest for Albanian and Balkan studies came later in comparison with the other ethnical groups and regions in Europe. The reason was that Euro-centrism of the late 19th century and the early 20th century defined the Balkans and its nations as the territory and peoples of quite obscure identity. In comparison with a "real Europe", the Balkans was "Orient", not part of Europe at all, and above all it was considered as "uncivilized" part of the world.

Nonetheless, when it started, the research upon Albanian studies was focused on the relationships of Albanian language to other European languages. However, the fist hypothesis of Albanian ethnical origin was quite indistinct and very soon discarded by the majority of scholars. According to this nebulous hypothesis by A. Schleicher, the Albanians originated from the Pelasgians who were supposed to be the most indigenous Balkan population, settled not only on the whole territory of the Balkan Peninsula, but also inhabited and major portion of the Mediterranean basin in the pre-historic times. Moreover, it was wrongly believed that Indo-European languages as the Greek, Latin and "ancient" Albanian (i.e., Illyrian language) were derived from the ancient Pelasgian language. However, some of Albanian scholars still today believe that this hypothesis has real scientific foundations regardless on the fact that later 19th century linguists and researchers in comparative philology undermined the "Pelasgian" hypothesis and finally at the beginning of the 20th century overturned it.

The German linguist Franz Bopp was the fist who claimed (in 1854) that Albanian language had to be considered as separate branch of Indo-European family of languages. Scientific foundation of the hypothesis that Albanians should derive their ethnical origin from the Balkan Illyrians according to the language criteria was laid by the late 19th century Austrian philologists Gustav Meyer. Exactly, he claimed that contemporary Albanian language was a dialect of ancient Illyrian language. His claims initially were based on the results of analyzed a few hundred basic Albanian words, tracing their Indo-European origin. Albanian national workers transformed later this Meyer's hypothesis into the "Illyrian" theory of Albanian ethnical background. Meyer's hypothesis was based on his result of linguistic investigations and comparisons of ancient Illyrian language with contemporary Albanian language. Meyer argued that modern Albanian language had to be considered as the last phase of old Illyrian language evolution. Specifically, according to him, the 19th century Albanian language was a dialect of ancient Illyrian language.[2] However, the crucial problem with Mayer's methodology was the fact that we do not have any source of recorded ancient Illyrian language as they have been illiterate. The reconstruction of this ancient language is a matter of the science of fantasy. Nevertheless, G. Meyer, a professor at Graz University from 1880 to 1896 wrote several works in which he was beating A. Schleicher's Pelasgian theory of Albanian origin. Mayer claimed in his works (*Albanesischen Studien*, *Albanesische Grammatik*, *Etymologische Wörterbuch der Albanesischen Schprache*) that Albanian language was nothing else than the dialect of the ancient Illyrian language.[3]

Meyer's hypothetical claims were taken up by majority of Albanian authors, primarily from Italy, who made use of them in the propaganda of realization of Albanian territorial claims and especially by Albanian nationalistic movement in the coming decades. The final aim of this propaganda work was to prove, using the scholarly evidence of research results, that Albanians were not members of ethnical Turks, Greeks or the South Slavic population, but rather members of a totally different ethnic group, who had its own language what was not so difficult to prove. In the other words, they fought for international recognition of the existence of separate Albanian nationhood which had certain national rights among which the right to create their own national independent (Albanian) state was the basic one. Such national state of Albanians should embrace all Albanian population in the Balkan Peninsula. For instance, the Albanian Constantinople Committee expressed on May

1854 (*Albanian studies*, Jena). Both of them had opinion, but not based on any source, that the Albanians live on the territories of the ancient Illyrians and they are native and Illyrian in essence. Hahn thought that ancient names like *Dalmatia, Ulcinium, Dardania*, etc. were of Illyrian-Albanian origin. This hypothesis is absolutely accepted by modern Albanian linguists. For example, we can read that "the name of *Ragusium* (present-day Dubrovnik), which in the mouth of the Albanians was *Rush Rush*, shows that the Adriatic coast was part of the territory inhabited by the ancestors of Albanians beyond the present ethnic borders. The adoption of this name by the Albanians belongs to the time since 614 B.C. For instance, we can read "I conclude that there is a continuity of the Albanians in their present territories since ancient times. The old place-names in their present form indicate that this population has continuously inhabited the coasts of the Adriatic from that time until today" [Çabej E., "The problem of the autochthony of Albanians in the light of place-names", *Buletini i Universitetit Shteteror te Tiranes*, № 2, 1958, pp. 54–62]. This standpoint is usually unquestionably recognized as the final truth by Albanian and German researchers like Peter Bartl in his book: *Albanian. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Regensburg, Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1995 [Serb language edition: Бартл П., *Албанци од средњег века до данас*, Београд: CLIO, 2001, p. 15]. However, the Illyrian theory of Albanian origin (the Albanians were considered even as the oldest European people) was created by German and Austrian scholars for the very political purpose: to unite all ethnic Albanians around the central political ideology and national consciousness [Батаковић Т. Б., *Косово и Метохија. Историја и идеологија*, Друго допуњено издање, Београд: Чигоја штампа, 2007, pp. 66−67; Екмечић Е., *Стварање Југославије 1790−1918*, II, Београд, 1989, pp. 450−455]. At that time, like today, the ethnic Albanians were divided into three antagonistic confessions (Islam, Roman-Catholicism and Orthodoxy) and many hostile clans based on the tribal origin. In fact, the German scholars invented for Albanians both artificial tradition and artificial "imagined community" in order to be more scientifically stronger in their territorial claims against the Serbs, Montenegrins and Greeks. In this context, we cannot forget that the first Albanian state was created and supported exactly by Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1912−1913. In the other words, the Albanians have been the Balkan clients of German political expansionism in the region.

[2] Regarding the contemporary scientific results on this question see in: Hamp E. P., "The Position of Albanian", *Proceedings of Conference on Indo-European Linguistics*, Los Angeles, 1963.

[3] Батаковић Т. Д., *Косово и Метохија. Историја и идеологија*, Друго допуњено издање, Београд: Чигоја штампа, 2007, p. 66.

30th, 1878 its wish for peaceful coexistence between the Albanians and their Slavonic and Greek neighbors, but only under condition that Albanian national lands would be included into unified Albanian national state.

The so-called *Italo-Albanians*, or *Arbereshi*, whose predecessors emigrated from Albania after the death of Scanderbeg in 1468 to the southern Italian provinces of Puglia, Calabria and Sicily, formulated this political program for unification of Albanians into united or Greater Albania. The program underlined that the achievement of national unity and liberation of the Albanians requires their territorial unification, joint economy, joint standardized language and a pervasive spirit of patriotism and mutual solidarity. Albanian national leader from the end of the 19th century, Naïm Frashëri (1846–1900), described with the following words what does mean to be Albanian: "All of us are only single tribe, a single family; we are of one blood and one language".[4] It is obvious that Albanian workers on national unification at the turn of the 20th century seek an Albanian ethnical and cultural identity primarily in common language since in Albanian case the religion was divisive rather than unifying factor. They demanded as well as, for the same purpose of national unification, that Albanian language should be written in the Latin alphabet in order to distinguish themselves from the neighboring Greeks, Serbs, Montenegrins and Ottoman lords what was totally irrelevant to overwhelming majority of the Albanians who could read no one script at all.[5] However, the national unification of Albanian people on the basis of language was not completely successful since even today there are many difficulties for Gheg Albanians to properly understand the Tosk Albanian dialect.[6]

3. The "Illyrian" Theory of Albanian Ethnical Origin

The so-called "Illyrian" theory of Albanian ethnical origin (created by German and Austrian scholars) is the most popular theory of Albanian nation's derivation among the majority of 19th and 20th century Albanian scholars, politicians and intellectuals.[7] The crucial and concluding point of this theory (in fact, it is just non-provable hypothesis) is that Albanians are authentic nation (ethnolinguistic group) at the Balkans, the oldest, aboriginal and autochthonous one in this part of Europe. As a result, Albanian South Slavic neighbors (the Serbs, Montenegrins,[8] and Macedonian Slavs) are, in comparison with "indigenous" Albanians, just the "newcomers" at the Balkans whose ethnicity and nationality are much younger than Albanian.[9] Subsequently, "historical rights" of the Balkan autochthonous Albanian population on certain disputed Balkan territories (between the Albanians and the South Slavs) are stronger, more justifiable and deeper historically rooted than "historical rights" of the Serbs, Montenegrins or Macedonian Slavs.[10]

According to the theory of Illyrian-Albanian ethnolinguistic continuity, the Albanians are descendants of the ancient Balkan population – the Illyrians. The national name of the Albanians comes from the name of one Illyrian tribe – the *Albanoi*. Furthermore, the tribal name of Albanoi was designated to entire number of Illyrian tribes around the Ionian Sea.[11] The proponents of Illyrian theory of

[4] Gut Ch., "Groupe de Travail sur l'Europe Centrale et Orientale", *Bulletin d'Information*, № 2, June 1878, Paris, p. 40.

[5] International political aspect of Albanian struggle for pan-Albanian national unification into Greater Albania is visible from the fact that Albanian national workers tried to get West European support for this project by claiming that Greater Albania would be the crucial bulwark against Russian penetration to the Balkans via Russian client (Orthodox) nations and states – the Serbs, Montenegrins and Greeks. For instance, Montenegro was presented by Albanians as "the Russian outpost at the Adriatic Sea". The Albanian Sami Frashëri published an article in Istanbul newspapers *Tercüman-i şark* on September 27th, 1878 in which the borders of Greater Albania were founded: four "Albanian" provinces (vilayets) of the Ottoman Empire – Scodra, Bitola, Ioanina and Kosovo would be united into the so-called "Albanian Vilayet". The First Prizren League, as the first organized Albanian political organization, accepted this project in the autumn of 1879 as the programe of the organization [Бартл П., *Албанци од средњег века до данас*, Београд: CLIO, 2001, pp. 96, 100−101]. See the appendix № 1.

[6] Hobsbawm E. J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1789. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 52, 115. About the language basis of (non)identification among the Albanians from the beginning of the 20th century see: Durham E., *High Albania*, London, 1909, p. 17.

[7] For example, Marmullaku R., *Albania and Albanians*, London, 1975, pp. 5–9; Miridita Z., *Istorija Albanaca* ("Iliri i etnogeneza Albanaca"), Beograd, 1969, pp. 6–13; *Historia e popullit Shqiptar*, I, Prishtinë, 1969, pp. 155–161.

[8] The "Montenegrins" should be considered in cultural, religious and ethnolinguistic point of view as the Serbs from Montenegro [Glomazić M., *Etničko i nacionalno biće Crnogoraca*, Beograd: TRZ „PANPUBLIK", 1988]. Historical, political, religious, economic and cultural relations between the Serbs from Montenegro (the Montenegrins) and the Serbs from Serbia are similar to these relations between the Germans from Austria (the Austrians) and the Germans from Germany. However, today c. 60% citizens of Montenegro claim that they are ethnolinguistic "Montenegrins" different from the Serbs.

[9] However, it is known that Albanian national identity was created by Austro-Hungarian authorities at the late 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century. Bulgarian scholar Teodora Todorova Toleva in her book on creation of Albanian national identity published in 2012 is showing by using unpublished documents from the Austrian State Archives (*Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*) in Vienna that the Austro-Hungarian authorities had a crucial influence on creation of Albanian nationality in the years of 1896−1908 [Тодорова Толева Т., *Влиянието на Австро-Унгария за създаването на албанската нация, 1896-1908*, София: CIELA, 2012]. This book is based on her Ph.D. dissertation defended at the Barcelona University on September 16th, 2008. See also: Schanderl D. H., *Die Albanienpolitik Österreich-Ungarns und Italiens 1877−1908*, Albanische Forschungen № 9, Wiesbaden: Otto Harassovitz, 1971.

[10] About the problem of relations between national identification and border identities see in: Wilson Th., Donnan H. (eds.), *Border Identities. Nation and state at international frontiers*, Cambridge, 1998.

[11] However, contemporary German historiography is not mentioning the Illyrian tribal name *Albanoi*. The territory of Albania in the ancient times during the ancient Greeks and Romans was populated only by the Illyrian tribe called *Taulantii*. In addition, neighboring present-day Greek territories have been settled by Illyrian tribe *Dassaretii*, while in ancient Macedonia lived *Paeones* and *Dardanes*, while Kosovo and Metohija were settled by *Scirtones* (*Westermann Großer Atlas zur Weltgeschichte*,

Albanian origin are building their hypothesis mostly on the speculation that modern Albanian language is directly descended from the ancient Illyrian one. Both of them belong to the same Indo-European language-group.[12] Nevertheless, this claim is disputed by contemporary linguistic science. The fact is that Albanian language as spoken language of the settlers of the present-day Albania was mentioned in historical sources for the first time only in 1285 in the manuscripts from Dubrovnik in which the language was named as *lingua albanesesca*. From the language-name is derived the land-name – *Albanon* (the territory on which Albanian language speakers lives). This term for Albania can be read, according to the supporters of this theory, in several 13th century Latin dictionaries, as well in some of the Byzantine historical sources. The same Byzantine sources called the region between the Lake of Scodra and the River of Drim as *Arbanon* (or *Arber*). This territory was settled, according to the Greek geographer Ptolemy from the 2nd century A.D., by the *Albanoi* tribe of Illyrian origin.[13]

The partisans of the Illyrian theory of Albanian origin are speaking in the favor of the school of thought of the origin and evolution of the Illyrians, which claims that ancient Illyrians did not migrated to the Balkans. Instead, they were an autochthonous people in this part of Europe and even one of the oldest settlers in Europe. It is suggested that the Albanians, as direct ethnical, political and cultural offspring of the ancient Illyrians, are the most original and indigenous inhabitants of the Balkans, even more aboriginal than the ancient Greeks for the reason that the ancient Greeks migrated to the Balkans in two great migration waves: firstly, around 2000 B.C., and secondly (Dorians), around 1200 B.C.[14] Clearly, the Albanian "historical" rights are much stronger, justifiable and historically deeper grounded in comparison with Serbian, Montenegrin, Greek or Macedonian Slavs' and Bulgarian rights referring to several Balkan territories of doubtful authenticity. In the other words, the Albanians are the "hosts" while their all neighbors are the "guests" in the Balkan Peninsula.[15] American mediaevalist John V. A. Fine simplified the crucial point of the theory of Illyrian-Albanian ethnical-cultural-political continuity as: "…if the Illyrians were the ancestors of the Albanians, then the Albanians, as original inhabitants, have some historic right to that region and possibly rights to other regions which had been settled by Illyrians. And their Illyrian ancestry has been very important in Albanian nation-building myths".[16]

The pivotal segment (from historically-political point of view) of the Illyrian theory is the claim that Illyrian-Albanian tribes withdrew from the vast areas of the Balkans settling themselves into the Balkan coastal towns and into the mountains of the present-day Albania, Epirus, Macedonia and Montenegro during the Slavic invasion and occupation of the Balkans in the 6th and 7th centuries. However, according to this theory, Kosovo and Metohija were only fertile lowlands in the whole Balkans, which were not abandoned by Romanized Illyrians-Albanians. As a result, Albanians of Illyrian ethnical origin were considered as autochthonous population of Kosovo and

Braunschweig, 1985, pp. 38–39).

[12] The "Illyrian" linguistic theories of Albanian and South Slavic ethnogenesis have certain similarities with the "Thracian" linguistic theory of ethnical origin of Lithuanian nation championed by the 19th century Lithuanian linguist and national worker Jonas Basanavičius. The theory was result of Basanavičius' linguistic research of ethnogenesis of the 19th century Lithuanian nation. In his book *Lietuviškai trakiškos studijos* he developed the theory according to which, part of ancient Thracians emigrated from their Balkan homeland and ultimately settled themselves in the eastern littoral of the Baltic Sea. Basanavičius exactly claimed that these Thracian migrants from the Balkans were the predecessors of the modern Lithuanian nation. The theory was based on the fact that ancient Thracian language was similar to the 19th century Lithuanian one. Both of these languages belong to the family of Indo-European languages. Basanavičius was working for years in Bulgaria and in order to prove his theory primarily was collecting the documents with the Thracian personal names, toponyms and names for different kinds of drinks and comparing them with those of Lithuanians. He claimed, for example, that Lithuanian personal name *Getas* comes from the Thracian tribal name *Getai* [Basanavičius J., *Lietuviškai trakiškos studijos*, Shenandoah, PA, 1898, pp. 8–15; Seen A. E., *Jonas Basanavičius: The patriarch of the Lithuanian national renaissance*, Newtonville, MA, 1980]. According to Basanavičius, the name for the mediaeval Lithuanian capital *Trakai* was derived from the Greek name for old Thracians, while some of the "Polish" names for the settlements (for instance, Kalisz in the region of Poznan) were not real Polish once: they were of Lithuanian-Thracian origin. Basanavičius concluded that ancient Thracians were of the same ethnicity as Lithuanians [Basanavičius J., *Lietuviškai trakiškos studijos*, Shenandoah, PA, 1898, pp. 21−74].

[13] Before the Ottoman conquering of the Balkans, the population of Albania called themselves as *Arbërësh/Arbënesh* and their country *Arbën/Arbër*. South Slavonic name for the people from Albania was *Arbanas*. The *Arnauts* (Арнауташи) were Islamized and later Albanized Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija who still did not forget their original ethnicity [Цвијић Ј., *Основе за географију и геологију Македоније и Старе Србије*, III, Београд, 1911, p. 1162−1166]. However, during the time of Albanian national revival movement in the late 19th century the Albanians called themselves as *Shqipëtarë* and the country *Shqipëtaria*. The name is most probably derived from the word *shqipe* what means "eagle" referring to the mountainous settlers of the high Albania. However, this word probably comes from old Dacian-Moesian language adopted by Bulgarians who settled themselves on the territory of Roman province of Moesia Inferior in 680/681. In Bulgarian language the "Shqiptars" means the "highlanders". The popular nickname for Albanians is the "Sons of the Eagle" and for Albania the "Land of the Eagle". Two the most important and powerful Albanian tribal units around 1900 were the Ghegs (the Roman Catholics) in the Northern Albania and the Tosks in the Southern Albania. The entire Albanian population was (and is) divided in religious point of view into the Muslims (majority of Albanians), the Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox (minority of Albanians). The last one live in the South-East Albania around the cities of Korçë and Gjirokastër (Argyrus). For more details see in: Skendi S., "Religion in Albania during the Ottoman rule", *Südost Forscungen*, № 15, Münich, 1956; Hobsbawm E. J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1789. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 70; and especially in: Hobhouse J. C. (Lord Broughton), *Travels in Albania and other provinces of Turkey in 1808 and 1810*, I, II, London, 1858.

[14] *Oxford Dictionary of World History. The world's most trusted reference books*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 253.

[15] For instance, see: Marmullaku R., *Albania and Albanians*, London, 1975, p. 6; Miridita Z., *Istorija Albanaca* ("Iliri i etnogneza Albanaca"), Beograd, 1969, p. 9.

[16] Fine J., *The Early Medieval Balkans*, Ann Arbor, 1994, p. 10.

Metohija while Slavonic Serbs and Montenegrins were seen and understood like occupiers and newcomers in the region of Kosovo and Metohija. Shortly, Illyrian-Albanian historical and ethnical rights on Kosovo and Metohija, as the land mostly disputed between Albanians and their neighbors, according to the champions of Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis, are even 15 centuries older than Slavonic Serbian-Montenegrin historical and ethnical rights upon the same territories.

This theory emphasizes that in the present-day Northern Albania grew up an extensive settlement of old inhabitants after the occupation of the Balkans by more powerful South Slavonic tribes.[17] This segment of the Illyrian theory was exceptionally used during the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 in order to refute Serbia's claims on the territory of northern Albania. Furthermore, Illyrian-Albanian population from the lowlands of Kosovo and Metohija began to fall under Slavonic political-cultural influence, while the Illyrian-Albanian mountainous tribes from high Albania, due to the less contacts with the Slavs, succeeded to maintain their social system and cultural inheritance unaltered. The defenders of this theory claim that the Byzantine province of Theme Dyrrhachium (which was established around 809 and covered the entire Albania's territory, part of Northern Epirus, Western Macedonia and the main part of Montenegrin littoral with the area of the Lake of Scutari) was populated by Albanian people who "caused the region to develop a special (Albanian) character".[18] Charles I of Naples (1227–1285) established his own feudal domain under the name of the *Regnum Albanai*, which is considered by Albanian historiography as the first Albanian national state, exactly on the territory of the Byzantine Theme Dyrrhachium. Its capital became the city of Dyrrhachium (Durazo/Durës/Drač/Epidamnos).

According to the Illyrian theory, the Albanians as one of the oldest European peoples, who live at the same territory since the early period of the Antiquity, deserved to be taken into account as one of the original features of Europe. They descended from the Illyrians, i.e. from a special branch of Indo-European peoples, just like the Greeks or Armenians. Besides, the Albanians have a language which reflects even the quality, intensity and times of important pre-Indo-European and Mediterranean (i.e., Pelasgian) influences, a culture different from the neighboring ones, three confessions which exist one beside other in religious tolerance, a common history of permanent resistance against any foreign power and subjugation, a partial (medieval) experience in independent statehood, a culture which shows an amalgamation of Illyrian-Balkan origins and East-West European elements, a very old and distinctive folk culture, and ultimately certain kind of "individualist toughness which, all together, singles the Albanians out of their immediate surroundings…"[19]

Subsequently, in historical and ethnical terms, the following territories in the South-Eastern Europe were inhabited by the Balkan Illyro-Albanians and should compose the territory of united (Greater) Albania, as the national state of all Albanians, in the future: from the area of the Lake of Scodra in Montenegro on the north, to the Bay of Ambrazio in Greece on the south, and from the Adriatic Sea on the west, to the River of Treska in Macedonia and Preševo, Medveđa, Bujanovac and Lebane districts in Serbia at the east.[20] That was and is, in the eyes of supporters of Illyrian theory of Albaian ethnogenesis, the exact territory of Illyro-Albanian 2.000 years old history and their culture.[21] The Albanian national movement *Rilindja* (1878–1913) aimed Albanian liberation from the Ottoman rule and to create a national Albanian state which borders will embrace the whole of above mentioned (ethnical and historical Albanian) territories. Political institution of the movement, the First League of Prizren (1878−1881),[22] established its own organizational structure

[17] This opinion is also shared by some Serbian scholars. For instance, Ferjančić B., *Istorija Albanaca* ("Albanija do XII veka"), Beograd, 1969, p. 29. The champions of the Illyrian theory frequently cited the words of Milovan Đilas, one of the leading Yugoslav Communists after the Second World War (and a war criminal) from Montenegro who wrote: "The Albanians are the most ancient Balkan people – older than the Slavs, and even the ancient Greeks" (cited from: [Costa N., *Albania: A European Enigma*, New York, 1995, p. 1]), or French scholar Andre Malraux who wrote that "Athens was, alas no more than an Albanian village" [Malraux A., *Anti-Memoirs*, New York, 1968, p. 33].

[18] Marmullaku R., *Albania and Albanians*, London, 1975, p. 8; Ferluga J, "Sur la date de la création du thème de Dyrrhachium", *Extrait des Actes du XII Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines*, vol. 2, Beograd, 1964, pp. 83−92. Regarding the borders of the Byzantine *Theme Dyrrhachium* see: Engel J. (ed.), *Großer Historischer Weltatlas. Mittelalter*, München, 1979, p. 14.

[19] Ismajly R., "Albanians and South-Eastern Europe (Aspects of Identity)", *Conflict or Dialogue. Serbian-Albanian relations and integration of the Balkans. Studies and Essays*, Subotica, 1994, p. 269.

[20] For example, *Protest of the Population of Shkodra, Podgorica, Shpuza, Zhabjak, Tivar, Ulqin, Gruda, Kelmend, Hot and Kastrat addressed to the Ambassador of France in Istanbul against the annexation of Albanian lands by Montenegro* (Shkodra, May 8, 1878), *Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères*, Paris, Fund of the French Embassy at the Sublime Porte, Turkey, vol. 417, pp. 51–54, supplement to the report № 96. Original in French. English translation in Pollo S., Pulaha S. (eds.), *Pages of the Albanian National Renaissance, 1878–1912*, Tirana, 1978, pp. 12–13; *Contents of the coded telegram sent by Dervish Pasha from Shkodra* (December 27, 1880), *Basbakanllik Arsive*, Istanbul, Fund of Jilldiz esas evraki, 14 88/16 88 12. Original in Turkish. See appendix № 2.

[21] However, several written historical sources from different cultural environments (Byzantine, Arab...) clearly say that the Albanians arrived to the Balkans in the year of 1043 from the Eastern Sycily and that the original place of living of the Albanians was the Caucasus Albania which is mentioned in several antique sources as an independent state with its own rulers. The Causasus Albania was neigboring the Caspian Sea, Media, Iberia, Armenia and Sarmatia Asiatica. The most important source in which is clearly mentioned that the Balkan Albanians came from the Eastern Sycily in 1043 is the Byzantine historian Michael Ataliota [Ataliota M., *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantine*, Bonn: Weber, 1853, p. 18]. This historical fact is recognized and by some of Albanian historians like Stefang Pollo and Arben Puto [Pollo S., Puto A., *The History of Albania*, London-Boston-Hebley: Routledge & Kegan, 1981, p. 37].

[22] The League (*Lidhja e Prizrenit*) was established in the town of Prizren in Metohija for the very political purpose: to claim that this old Serbian town is in fact Albanian one. However, Prizren was at that time settled by

which covered the entire of these territories clearly directed its political activities towards the establishment of united ethnical state of all Albanians.[23] The League launched the motto: "feja e shqyptarit asht shqyptaria" ("Religion of the Albanians is Albanianism") for the sake of overcoming Albanian religious diversity and separation. This movement has been the crucial united force of Albanians and the pivotal point for definition of the national identity and development of the Albanians.

4. The Illyrians – Autochthonous Balkan People

It is true that every story about the Balkan Peninsula begins with the ancient Illyrians.[24] Historians believe that this Indo-European people were one of the largest European population inhabited the western portion of the Balkans along the coasts of the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic Sea to the Alps around the year of 1000 B.C. Their eastern neighbors were also the Indo-European peoples – the Thracians. The demarcation line between their settlements, cultural and political influence was on the River of Morava in present-day Serbia (in Latin, the River of Margus located in the Roman province of Moesia Superior) and the River of Vardar in present-day Macedonia. On the north, on the shores of the River of Sava and the River of Danube, their neighbors were the Celts, while on the south the Pindus Mountains separated the Illyrians from the ancient Macedonians and the Greeks.[25] The Illyrians lived on the eastern littoral of the Adriatic Sea around 500 B.C. as it is suggested by the Greek geographer Hecatei (Hecateus) from the Asia Minor's city of Miletus. According to the early Byzantine historian Pseudo-Scilac, who lived 150 years later, the Illyrian settlements at the Balkans reached at the south the area of the southern Albanian port of Valona (Vlorë).[26] Among the ancient and early medieval historians and geographers the most reliable information upon geographic dispersion of the Illyrians and demography of the Illyrian territory can be found in the writings of Herodotus, Livy, Pliny, Ptolomy, Appianus, Strabo, Procopius of Ceasarea, Synecdemos of Hierocles, Isidorus Hispaniensis, and Euagrius.

When the Celts came to the Balkans in the 3rd century B.C. some of Illyrian tribes mixed with them. In the same century Illyrian King Agron from the tribe of *Ardaei* organized the first Illyrian state. At the time of its greatest extension this state had the borders on the River of Neretva in Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the River of Vjosë in the Southern Albania and the Ohrid Lake in Macedonia. Some of the early 20th century Albanian historians and national workers claimed that Albanian right to require the national state organization in 1912–1913 was grounded on Albanian political-state inheritance from the Agron's Illyrian Kingdom. Nevertheless, the Romans succeeded to defeat the Illyrians and to abolish their own state organization during three Illyrian-Roman Wars between 229 and 168 B.C.

The administratively-political concept of "Illyria", or "Illyricum", was created in the following centuries by the Romans who after the new conquests in the Balkans established firstly the Province of, and later on, the *Praefectura of Illyricum*.[27] It stretched from the Istria Peninsula on the north-west to the Northern Albania on the south-east, and from the Adriatic littoral on the south to the River of Drava on the north. In spite of that, the main portion of Albania left out of this province as it was included into the Roman province of Macedonia. This fact can be explained by Roman consideration that only the territory of Northern Albania was settled by Illyrian tribes, but not the Central and Southern Albania. The proponents of Illyrian theory of Albanian origin did not give answer to

70% of the Serbs and 30% of the Albanians. The town was a capital of Serbia in the 14th century with the royal-emperial court and the Orthodox cathedral (саборна црква) built in 1307. Today in the town of Prizren left only several Serbian houses. Metohija is a term of the Greek origin (μετόχι) for the land owned by the Orthodox church. As the Serbian medieval rulers granted a huge portions of land between the towns of Peć, Prizren, Mitrovica and Priština to the Serbian Orthodox Church the western part of Kosovo became called as Metohija [Батаковић Т. Д., *Косово и Метохија у српско-арбанашким односима*. Друго допуњено издање, Београд, Чигоја штампа, 2006, p. 10]. This province is called by the Serbs as Kosovo and Metohija, while the Albanians purposely calling this province only as Kosova/Kosovë, but not mentioning Metohija at all.

[23] For example, *The Activity of the Albanian League of Prizren in the vilayet of Kosova* (1880), Consul-General Blunt to the Marquis of Salisbury, *Public Record Office, Foreign Affairs*, London, № 195/1323; *The British Museum,* London, Fund of Accounts and Papers (43), 1880, LXXXII, 82, 77–78. The document is published in: Rizaj S., *The Albanian League of Prizren in British Documents, 1878–1881*, Prishtina, 1978, pp. 279–280.

[24] Stipčević A., *Every Story About the Balkans Begins with the Illyrians*, Priština, 1985; Buda A., "The Southern Illyrians as a Problem of Historiography", *Historical Writings*, vol. 1, pp. 13–15. During the last decades there are many scholars who claim that the Balkan Illyrians (and Thracians) have been nothing else but the ethnolinguistic Serbs [Бајић Ј., *Блажени Јероним, Солинска црква и Србо-Далмати*, Шабац, 2003; Деретић И. Ј., Антић П. Д., Јарчевић М. С., *Измишљено досељавање Срба*, Београд: Сардонија, 2009; Милановић М., *Историјско порекло Срба*, Београд: Admiral Books, 2011; Земљанички Б., *Срби староседеоци Балкана и Панониje у војним и цивилним догађајима са Римљанима и Хеленима од I до X века*, Београд: Стручна књига, 1999]. In the other words, they claim, that the Serbs, but not the Albanians, are the only autochtonous people (nation) at the Balkan Peninsula, according to the historical souces of the time.

[25] Islami S., Anamali S., Korkuti M, Prendi F., *Les Illyriens*, Tirana, 1985, p. 5; Anamali S., "The Illyrians and the Albanians", Prifti K., Nasi L., Omari L., Xhufi P., Pulaha S., Pollo S., Shtylla Z. (eds.), *The Truth on Kosova*, Tirana, 1993, p. 5; Cabanes P., *Les Illyriens de Bardylis à Genthios, IV–II siècles avant J.C*, Paris, 1988, p. 17. The borders of geographical distribution of the Illyrian population in Antique Balkans are primarily reconstructed according to the writings of the Greek historians Herodotus who lived in the 5th century B.C. and wrote *Historiae* and Appianus who lived in the 2nd century A.D. and wrote *Illyrica*.

[26] The most outstanding Illyrian tribes were: *Iapudes, Dalmatae, Autariatae, Docletae* and *Taulantii*.

[27] The *Praefectura of Illyricum* was subdivided into the following Provinces: Dacia Ripensis, Dacia Mediterranea, Moesia Superior Margensis, Dardania, Praevalis, Macedinia Prima, Macedonia Secunda, Epirus Nova, Epirus Vetus, Thessalia, Achaia and Creta.

the question: why the whole Albania was not included into the Roman Province of Illyricum if it was entirely settled by the Illyrians? The Romans finally subjugated all Illyrian tribes in the new war between the years of 6 and 9 A.D.

From that time the overwhelming and very successful process of Romanization of the whole Balkan Peninsula started.[28] Some protagonists of the Illyrian theory of Albanian origin developed the hypothesis that the Roman Emperors Aurelian, Diocletian and Probus, who originated from the western part of the Balkans, which was settled by the Illyrian tribes, can be considered as the predecessors of the modern Albanian nation.[29] During the time of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (284–305), who was of Illyrian origin, the whole territory of the Balkans, except its eastern part, was administratively organized as the Praefectura Illyricum. Mainly due to such Roman administrative organization of their possessions in the Balkans the names Illyria and Illyrians were preserved for the very long period of time as common names for the peoples who lived in the western and central parts of the Balkans, i.e. for the South Slavs[30] and the Albanians.[31] Definitely, according to the 19th–21st century official sciences of history, ethnology and philology (but not and according to many relevant sources), the Illyrians were not the Slavs. The later came to the Balkans 1.500 years after the Illyrians.[32]

Clearly, the name Illyrians disappeared in the 7th century at the time of the Slavic migration to the Balkans. After the 6th century, however, in the Byzantine texts there were no reports about the Illyrians who abandoned the Balkan territories from the Dalmatian Alps to the River of Danube. The new Illyrian political and cultural center became the region of *Arbanum* (in Greek, *Αρβανον* or *Αλβανον*, in Serbian, *Рабан*) in the Southern Albania. The name "Albani" appeared in historical sources not before the 9th century. The Byzantine historians used the name "Albani" for the Slavic inhabitants living around the sea-port of Durazzo (ancient Dyrrhachium) in the Northern Albania. From the 11th century the name "Albani" (in Latin, Arbanensis, or Albanenses, in Greek, *Αλβανοι* or *Αρβανιται*) was related to all Albanian tribes.[33]

In the Middle Ages the "Albanoi" lived on the territory between the cities of Skadar, Prizren, Ohrid and Valona. According to the champions of the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis, the Slavic raids and migrations to the Balkans in the early Middle Ages did not affect the native inhabitants on the territory of the present-day

[28] Regardless on the fact that the Latin language did not replace Illyrian one on the territory of Albania during the Roman rule as the Latin did not become the language of the common people, the Illyrian language was Romanized in certain degree and the Latin alphabet became later chosen by the Albanian national workers as a national script of the Albanians (one of the reasons for such decision was of the pure political nature). It shows that Roman/Latin elements, besides the Illyrian ones, participated in the process of the ethnogenesis of the Albanians. The proponents of the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis refute this opinion emphasizing that the number of Latin inscriptions found in Albania is small when compared with the number found in the other provinces of the Roman Empire. Their total number is 293. Half of these inscriptions are found in and around the Roman colony located in the ancient city of Dyrrhachium. Theodore Mommsen thought that the people used exclusively Illyrian language in the interior of Albania during the Roman occupation [Mommsen T., *The Provinces of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1, Chicago, MCMLXXIV, pp. 202–203]. For the supporters of the Illyrian theory, as Dardania was one of the least Romanized Balkan regions its native population preserved its ethnic individuality and consciousness. Subsequently, the Dardanians, who escaped Romanization and survived the South Slavic migrations to the Balkans, emerged in the Middle Ages with the name of Albanians. However, the Latin terminology in modern Albanian language and the place-names in Albania are evidences of Illyrian-Albanian Romanization/Latinization.

[29] However, the proponents of the theory of Serbian Balkan origin claim that all Balkan-born Roman emperors (c. 20) were the ethnic Serbs. Diocletian and Constantine the Great are the most important among them.

[30] Among the South Slavs, and partially among the Poles and Russians, the Illyrian theory of Slavic origin was widespread from the early 16th century to the early 19th century. According to this theory, the South Slavs were the autochthonous population in the Balkans originated from the ancient Illyrians. Furthermore, all Slavs formerly lived in the Balkans and were known by the ancient authors as the Illyrians. At the beginning of the Middle Ages they split themselves into three groups: one group migrated to the Central Europe (the Western Slavs), another group went to the Eastern Europe (the Eastern Slavs) while the last group left in the Balkans (the South Slavs). According to several medieval chronicles, the South Slavic ascendants were the ancient Illyrians, Thracians and Macedonians. As a result, Alexander the Great, Constantine the Great, Diocletian and St. Hieronim were of the South Slavic origin. In the time of Humanism, Renaissance, Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, the following Dubrovnik (Ragusian) writers became the most prominent champions of this theory: Vinko Pribojević (*On Origin and History of the Slavs*, printed in Venice in 1532), Mavro Orbini (*De Regno Sclavorum*, printed in Pesaro in 1601) and Bartol Kašić (*Institutiones Linguae Illyricae*, printed in 1604). Pribojević claimed that all Slavs were speaking one common language, which originated from the Balkans. For him, the Russians spoke Dalmatian dialect of the common Slavic language. This common Slavic language was named by Dubrovnik writers as "Our", "Illyrian" or "Slavic" one. Subsequently, all Slavs who spoke "Our" language belonged to "Our" people. The influence of the Illyrian theory of (the South) Slavic origin can be seen in: 1) the work of Serbian noblemen from Transylvania, Count Đorđe Branković (1645–1711) who wrote in 1688 the first political program of the South Slavic unification into free and independent state called by him as the "Illyrian Kingdom"; in 2) the fact that Orbini's *De Regno Sclavorum* was translated into the Russian language in 1722; and in 3) the act that the Croatian movement of national renewal from the time of the first half of the 19th century was officially called as the "Illyrian Movement".

[31] Miridita Z., *Istorija Albanaca* ("Iliri i etnogeneza Albanaca"), Beograd, 1969, pp. 9-10; Qabej W., *Hyrje në historinë e gjuhës shipe*, Prishtinë, 1970, pp. 29–32; Prifti K., Nasi L., Omari L., Xhufi P., Pulaha S., Pollo S., Shtylla Z. (eds.), *The Thruth on Kosova*, Tirana, 1993, pp. 5–73; Dobruna E., "On some ancient toponyms in Kosova", *Onomastika e Kosoves*, Prishtina, 1979; Anamali S., "The Problem of the Formation of the Albanian people in the Light of Archaeological Information", *The National Conference on the formation of the Albanian people, their language and culture*, Tirana, 1988; Çabej E., "The problem of the autochthony of Albanians in the light of place-names", *Buletini i Universitetit Shteteror te Tiranes*, № 2, 1958, pp. 54–62.

[32] For instance: Ћоровић В., *Историја Срба*, Београд: БИГЗ, 1993, pp. 3−66; Ферјанчић Б., *Византија и Јужни Словени*, Београд: Завод за издавање уџбеника Социјалистичке Републике Србије, 1966, pp. 20−26; Kont F., *Sloveni. Nastanak i razvoj slovenskih civilizacija u Evropi (VI−XIII vek)*, Beograd: Zavod za izdavačku delatnost „Filip Višnjić", 1989, pp. 14−43; Пипер П., *Увод у славистику*, 1, Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства Београд, 1998, pp. 81−96.

[33] The name for Albanians - "Арбанаси" is derived from the Latin name for Albanians as the "Arbanenses".

Albania who continued to live there by preserving their own culture, habits and social organization. Shortly, the southern Illyrian provinces retained its previous ethnical composition. And of course, this previous ethnical composition was (unproved by the sources) the Albanian one.

5. The Dardanians – the Illyro-Albanians, the Daco-Moesians or the Thracians?

The Albanian historiography claims that the Central Balkan tribe - Dardanians, who were settled in the southern portion of the territory of the Roman Province of Moesia Superior and northwestern part of the Roman Province of Macedonia, should be considered as one of the Illyrian tribes as an ancestor of the Albanians. The Albanian historians in this point referring to the German linguist Norbert Jokl who wrote, according to the research of historical toponomastics, that the ancient cradle of the Albanians was Dardania, wherefrom they moved westwards to their present territories in the late Roman time. [34] Consequently, the northwestern territory of the present-day Republic of Macedonia (the FYROM), Kosovo and Metohija and the present-day Southern Serbia (settled by the Dardanians in the Antiquity likewise the northeastern portion of the present-day Republic of Albania) are considered as the Albanian historical lands and had to be included into united Albanian national state in the future. For Albanian proponents of the theory of Illyrian-Albanian symbiosis, the most valuable information and evidence that the ancient Dardanians were exactly the Illyrians (and thus the Albanian ancestors) comes from the archaeological excavations in Kukës region in the Northeastern Albania which belonged to the western portion of Dardanian state.[35] What is of extreme importance according to them, the traditional Illyrian names like Andinus, Annius, Dassius, Epicadus, Genthiana, Rhedon, Surus, Tata, Tridus can be found in the inscriptions in Dardania. The Yugoslav specialist in Illyrology, Henrik Barić from Sarajevo, also championed the idea that "the Balkan homeland of the Albanian people must have been *Dardania-Paeonia*, provinces which, judging from the known names of persons, were Illyrian and not Thracian in Antiquity…Therefore, it can be said that Dardania and Paeonia were the provinces in which the early Albanian-Illyrian symbiosis took place in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula". [36] Barić in fact disagreed with the theory of Romanian linguist Mateescu who, in his detailed analyzes of the epigraphic material, found the Thracian infiltration in the province of Dardania in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.[37]

The Albanian exponents of the theory of Illyrian-Albanian continuity and the ethnical symbiosis repeatedly quote the words of Arthur Evans that the same coins, pottery and other handcraft products from ancient Dyrrhachium and Apollonia (located on Albanian littoral) are found in Kosovo and Metohija (in the regions of Peć, Đakovica and Prizren).[38] This fact is, however, only the evidence of the Hellenization of the Illyrians as the coins were of the Greek origin. The Greek language was evidently the written language of official inscriptions among the educated class of the Illyrian society.[39] The Yugoslav historian Fanula Papazoglu discovered Dacian-Moesian or Phrigian stratum in the formation of the Dardanians. For that reason, the Dardanians cannot be identified with the Illyrians and cannot contribute in developing of the Illyrian-Albanian ethnic self-awareness.[40] Finally, the modern European ethnographic and historical sciences suggest that the homeland of the Albanian nation lies in what is today the Central Albania. The German Illyrologist-Albanologist, Georg Stadtmüller, stresses that the original Albanian native region includes the valley of the River of Shkumba, both sides of the River

[34] Jokl N., *Eberts Reallexicon der Vorgeschichte*, I, 1924, p. 91.

[35] Anamali S., "The Illyrians and the Albanians", Prifti K., Nasi L., Omari L., Xhufi P., Pulaha S., Pollo S., Shtylla Z. (eds.), *The Thruth on Kosova*, Tirana, 1993, p. 7; Jubani B., "Features of Illyrian Culture in the Territory of Dardania", *Illyria*, 2, 1985, pp. 211−220; Islami S., *The Illyrian State – Its Place and Role in the Mediterranean World,* I, Tirana, 1974, pp. 85–105.

[36] Taken from *Hymje ne historine e gjuhes shqipe*, Prishtinë, 1955, pp. 49–50.

[37] Mateescu N., "Granita de apur a Tracilor", *Annuarul Institutului de Istoria nationale*, III, Cluj, 1923, pp. 377–492.

[38] Evans A., "Antiquarian Researches in Illyricum", *Archeologia*, XLIX, Westminster, 1883, p. 62.

[39] Papazoglu F., "Les royaumes d'Illyrie et de Dardanie, Origines et development, structures, hellenisation et romanization", *Iliri i Albanci*, Beograd, 1988, p. 194; Ceka N., "Survay of the Development of Urban Life Among Southern Illyrians", *Illyria*, 2, 1985, pp. 119–136. Compare with: Toçi V., "New Data About the Illyrian Onomastics in Durrhachium", *Illyria*, 1, 1986, pp. 123–135.

[40] Regarding the problem of the Illyrian origin of the very important Central Balkan tribe *Dardanians* see in: Garašanin M., "Considerations finales", *Iliri i Albanci*, Beograd, 1988, pp. 370–372; Garašanin M., "Razmatranja o makedonskom halštatu-Materijalna kultura, hronologija, etnički problem", *Starinar*, V−VI, 1954–1955, pp. 37–40; Garašanin M., "Istočna granica Ilira prema arheološkim spomenicima", *Simpozijum o teritorijalnom i hronološkom razgraničenju Ilira u praistorijsko doba*, Sarajevo, 1964, pp. 138–141; Mack R., *Grenzmarken und Nachbarn Makedonien in Norden und Western*, Gottingen, 1951, pp. 170–173; Vulpe R., *Gli Illiri dell'Italia Imperiale Romana*, III, 1925, p. 163; Cerskov E., *Rimljani na Kosovu i Metohiji*, Beograd, 1969, p. 106; Mirdita Z., "Dardanian Studies", *Rilindja*, Prishtina, 1979, p. 49; Papazoglu F., *Srednjobalkanska plemena u predrimsko doba*, Sarajevo, 1969, p. 402; Papazoglu F., "Dardanska onomastika", *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta*, 8–1, Beograd, 1964; Papazoglu F., "Les royaumes d'Illyrie et de Dardanie, Origines et development, structures, hellenisation et romanization", *Iliri i Albanci*, Beograd, 1988, p. 174; Jubani B., "Features of Illyrian Culture in the Territory of Dardania", *Illyria*, 2, 1985, pp. 211−222; Вулић Н., "Дарданци, Илири и Далмати ", *Глас Српске Академије Наука*, CLV, Београд, 1933. While the Yugoslav historian Novak claimed that the Dardanians were not of the Illyrian origin his compatriot Budimir claimed that they were one of Illyrian tribes [Новак Г., "La nazionalità dei Dardani", *Архив за арбанашку старину*, IV, Београд, pp. 72–89; Будимир М., "O etničkom odnosu Dardanaca prema Ilirima", *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*, III, Beograd, 1937, pp. 1–29; Будимир М., *Грци и Пеласти*, Београд, 1950].

of Mat, Kruja, and some neighboring areas.[41]

The highlanders from Albania, however, started to migrate from their mountains from the mid-14th century towards more fertile lowlands of Thessaly, Boeotia, Attica, Euboea and Peloponnese, while from the end of the 17th century they started to migrate towards the north-east occupying the territories of Kosovo and Metohija (the "Old Serbia" or Serbia propper) and the territories of the present-day Serbia around the cities of Novi Pazar, Vranje and Niš.[42] Certainly, not until the 18th century did the masses of the Albanian herdsmen start coming down from their native country's highlands to the fertile areas of Kosovo and Metohija, populated until that time almost exclusively by the Eastern Orthodox Serbs, and to the regions of today's Western Macedonia (from Skopje to Bitola) inhabited by the majority of Macedonian Slavs and the minority of the Serbs.[43] Practically, the territory of the former Roman province of Dardania mainly settled by Dardanian tribe was not influenced by the Illyrian-Albanian elements before the migrations of the Albanian tribes from high Albania since the end of the 17th century. The supporters of the theory of Illyrian-Albanian ethnical continuity and symbiosis, however, asseverate that at the time of the Slavic incursions on the Balkans there was no large-scale settling of the Slavs in the territory of Kosovo, Metohija and Montenegro, i.e. in the former Roman *Provinces of Dardania and Praevalis*. According to E. Dobruna, an Albanian archaeologist from Kosovo, who investigated ancient toponyms in this region, "we find the continuous presence of native Albanians as successors of the Illyrians in the same territory where they live today since ancient times".[44] "From the banks of the Bojana River, as far as Yanina, a unified and homogeneous people live. From Yanina to Bay of Ambrazio, lies the territory denied by the Greek religious and other propaganda to the Albanians, who are predominant there – if not in number, than at least in strength and capacity to resist".[45] Consequently, Illyrian-Albanian historical rights on these territories are longer and stronger than Slavic-Serbian-Montenegrin-Macedonian and even Greek ones.[46]

6. A Question of the "Koman Culture"

The majority of Albanian archaeologists declared that the *Koman Culture*, existed in the 7th and 8th centuries, represents historical-ethnical continuity of Illyrian-Albanian ethnogenesis. The *Koman Culture*, according to them, included an extensive territory from the Skadar Lake on the north to the Ohrid Lake on the southeast. For them, the Illyrian-Albanian ethnic roots of the *Koman Culture* are more than obvious (but not scientifically proved).

The importance of this culture for the Albanian albanologists is of an extreme value as they are trying to prove that the *Koman Culture* is the direct continuation of the local Illyrian-Albanian culture of the late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In the other words, according to them, the *Koman Culture* shows that at the time of Slavic migration to the Balkans the native Illyrian-Albanian territories had stability and vitality. They further claim that the material findings of the *Koman Culture*, which lasted during the period of transition from the late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages, are common for all Illyrian-Albanian regions including those of Kosovo and Metohija, Eastern Montenegro and Western Macedonia.

The Albanian archaeologists disregard with the opinion of their Yugoslav colleagues about the Slavic or Roman-Byzantine character of the *Koman Culture*.[47] Thus, for the

[41] Stadtmüller G., "Forschungen zur albanischen fruhgeschichte, zweite erweiterte auflage", *Albanische Forschungen*, 2, Wiesbaden, 1966, pp. 167, 173.

[42] Оболенски Д., *Византијски Комонвелт*, Београд, 1996, p. 12, p. 245; Острогорски Г., *Историја Византије*, Београд, 1959, p. 464, p. 505; Lemerle P., "Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque Romaine jusqu'au VIIIe siècle", *Revue historique*, 78, 1954, p. 294; Lemerle P., *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Demétrius*, II, Paris, 1981, p. 67; Јиречек К., *Историја Срба. Политичка историја до 1537. годе.,* Књига I, Београд, 1978 (original written in German and published in Wien, 1911), pp. 85–86, 216; Јиречек К., Радонић Ј., *Историја Срба. Културна историја*, Књига II, Београд, 1978 (unfinished original by K. Jirechek in German, printed in Wien, 1911. Completed by J. Radonjić), pp. 33, 34, 101, 105, 145, 153. On the Albanian residents in Southeastern Serbia in the districts of Niš, Leskovac, Prokupjle and Kuršumlija in 1878 see in: *Protest of 6200 Albanian emigrants…* (Priština, June 26, 1878), *Politisches Archiv des Auswartigen Amtes*, Bonn, Fund of the Acts of the Congress of Brlin, 2, 1878, doc. № 110 (telegram).

[43] The Roman Catholic bishop in Skopje, Matija Masarek wrote in 1764 a report to Vatican in which he noted brand-new colonies of the Albanians who had just abandoned high Albania and settled themselves in the lowland of Metohija around the city of Đakovica [Radonić J., *Rimska kurija i južnoslovenske zemlje od XVI do XIX veka*, Beograd, 1950, p. 654]. On religious and ethnical situation in Albania, Kosovo and Metohija in the mid-17th century see in Jačov M., *Le Missioni cattoliche nel Balcani durante la guerra di Candia (1645–1669)*, vol. I–II, Città del Vaticana, 1992, in the mid-19th century in Müller J., *Albanien, Rumelien und die österreichisch-montenegrinische Granze*, Prag, 1844, and in the years from 1804 to 1912 in Стојанчевић В., *Срби и Албанци 1804–1912*, Нови Сад, 1994. According to the Serbian historian Jevrem Damnjanović, the members of the following Albanian tribes (fisses) settled Kosovo and Metohija during the Ottoman rule: Kriezi, Tsaci, Shop, Dukadjini, Berisha, Bitiqi, Krasniqi, Gashi, Shkrele, Kastrati, Gruda, Shala, Hoti, and Kelmendi [Дамњановић Ј., "Мученишство Косова", *Интервју*, специјално издање, октобар, Београд, 1988, p. 5].

[44] Dobruna E., "On some ancient toponyms in Kosova", *Onomastika e Kosoves*", Prishtina, 1979, p. 46.

[45] Stulli B., *Albansko pitanje*, JAZU, Zagreb, vol. 318, 1959, p. 325.

[46] Çabej E., "The problem of the autochthony of Albanians in the light of place-names", *Buletini i Universitetit Shteteror te Tiranes*, № 2, 1958, pp. 54–62.

[47] Anamali S., "La nécropole de Kruje et la civilisation du Haut Moyen Age en Albanie du Nord", *Studia Albanica*, 1, 1964, pp. 149–164; Anamali S., "The Question of the Albanian Early Mediaeval Culture in the Light of New Archaeological Discoveries", *Studime Historike*, 2, 1967, pp. 22–40; Spahiu H., "The Arber graveyard at the Dalmaca Castle", *Illyria*, 9–10, 1979–1980, pp. 23–45; Komata D., "The Arber grave-yard of Shurdhah", *Illyria*, 9–10, 1979–1980, pp. 105–121; Prendi F., "A grave-yard of the Arber culture in Lezha", *Illyria*, 9–10, 1979–1980, pp. 123–170; Doda N., "The Arber Graves of Prosek in Mirdita Region", *Illyria*, 1, 1989, p. 113; Spahiu H., Komata D., "Shurdhah-Sarda, a Mediaeval Fortified Town", *Illyria*, 3, 1975, p. 249; Popović V., *Byzantins, Slaves et autochthones dans les provinces de Prévalitane et Nouvelle Epire*, Ecole française de Rome, 1984, pp. 181−243; Popović V., "Albanija u kasnoj antici", *Ilirci i Albanci*,

Albanian scientists, the archaeologists have discovered many localities from the 7th and 8th centuries, which clearly fill the gap of the Illyrian-Albanian cultural-ethnical continuity, the gap which could not be filled completely from the written historical (primarily Byzantine) sources. To conclude, for the Albanian Albanology, exactly the *Koman Culture* is the crucial grummet in the chain of the unbroken Illyrian-Albanian ethnogenesis from the early Antique up today. It has to serve as the pivotal proof of allegedly Albanian originality at the Balkan Peninsula.

However, it is known that large Slavic settlements and toponyms existed in the area that came to be known as present-day Albania. After the first Albanian state was created in 1912, and especially during the rule of the Albanian communist dictator, Enver Hoxha (1945–1985), however, a great part of the non-Albanian (especially Slavic) population and toponyms have been Albanized.[48] Simultaneously, "Albanian national soil" was (and is) gradually cleansed from both the Slavs and the Greeks[49] and their national-cultural traces. In this respect, the province of Kosovo and Metohija experienced the most serious ethnic and cultural cleansing in the post-1945 Europe (together with the territory of ex-Republic of Serbian Krayina in the present-day Croatia which was cleaned by the Croat military and police forces in August 1995).[50] This southern Serbia's province, known as the "Old Serbia", or "Serbia proper", became almost totally ethnically and culturally cleaned by the local ethnic Albanians after the province was occupied by the NATO troops in June 1999. Today, there are only up to 3% of non-Albanian population in the province (comparing to 13% in 1998), the Slavic-Serb toponyms are renamed to the Albanian ones, the Serb cultural property, as the fact of the national existence in the province from historical perspective, is very much destroyed or officially called as the "Byzantine" one and the rest of non-Albanian population (together with the local Serbs) is expelled from the province which proclaimed state independence in February 2008.[51]

At such a way, Kosovo and Metohija became exclusively Albanian populated and culturally inherited land – a part of united national state of the ethnic Illyro-Albanians in the form of the Greater Albania. Nevertheless, from the perspective of relevant historical source (the Ottoman census in 1455), there were only 2% of Albanian population in the province in the mid-15th century.[52] One of the most famous South Slavic philologists in the 20th century, Pavle Ivić came to the conclusion after a deeper investigation of the case-study of Kosovo and Metohija that "the factual material clearly shows that there was no linguistic continuity between the ancient population of the present province of Kosovo's population, and those who now inhabit the area".[53] This is one of the most serious scientific refutation of the Albanian hypothesys of the Illyrian-Albanian ethnogenesis. In addition, even today, overwhelming majority (if not all) of the toponyms in Kosovo and Metohija are of the Slavic (Serb) origin. The present-day Albanian practice to Albanize them is quite understandable from the perspective of the political aims of the proponents of the hypothesis of the Illyrian-Albanian ethnogenesis.

7. The "Dacian" Theory of the Albanian Ethnical Background

The hypothesis and later accepted theory of the Albanian-Illyrian identification is seriously challenged by many contemporary linguists and historians as simply hypothesis not based on historical sources. Thus, the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnical origin and national inheritance had four weakest points:

- The ancient Illyrians, according to some scholars, are not indigenous Balkan people as they migrated to the Balkans around 1000 B.C. (i. e., later than the ancient Greeks).
- There are enough number of relevant historical sources of the time according to which, the Balkan Albanian motherland was the Caucasus Albania in the present-day Province of Dagestan of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan (see the appendix № 4).
- The claim of Illyrian-Albanian ethnogenesis is not based on any relevant historical source – it is much more just unproved hypothesis than the real scientific theory.

Beograd, 1988, pp. 202–283.

[48] Hrabak B., "Širenje arbanaških stočara po ravnicama i slovenski ratari srednjovekovne Albanije", *Stanovništvo slovenskog porijekla u Albaniji*, Titograd, 1991, p. 115. Regarding the Slavic toponyms in Albania see: Popović V., "Albanija u kasnoj Antici", *Ilirci i Albanci*, Beograd, 1988; Selischev A. M., *Славианское население в Албании*, София, 1931.

[49] Gersin K., *Altserbien und die albanische Frage*, Wien, 1912, p. 29; Vlora B. E., *Lebenserinnerungen*, *Band I (1885 bis 1912)*, München, 1968, p. 275; Vlora B. E., *Die Wahrheit über das Vorgehen der Jungtürken in Albanien*, Wien, 1911, p. 43. According to the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, from April 1941 until August 1942, the Albanians killed around 10.000 Serbs and Montenegrins in the areas of Kosovo and Metohija which were incorporated into Italian Greater Albania [Krizman S., *Maps of Yugoslavia at War. Massacre of the Innocent Serbian Population, Committed in Yugoslavia by the Axis and its Satellites from April 1941 to August 1942*, Washington, 1943].

[50] See the appendix № 3.

[51] *March Pogrom in Kosovo and Metohija, March 17−19, 2004, with a survey of destroyed and endangered Christian cultural heritage*, Belgrade: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia−Museum in Priština (displaced), 2004; http://crucified-kosovo.webs.com; http://www.kosovo.net; http://www.crucified-kosovo.eu

[52] Šabanović H. (ed.), Hadžibegić H., Handžić A., Kovačević E. (prepared by), *Oblast Brankovića. Opširni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine* (original title: *Defter-I, Mufassal-I, Vilayet-I, VLK, sene 859*), Monumenta Turcica. Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium Illustrantia, Tomus tertius, serija III, Defteri, knjiga 2, sv. 1, Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 1972.

[53] Ивић П., *О језику некадашњем и садашњем*, Београд: БИГЗ−Јединство, 1990, p. 141.

- Finally, there are indications that the Albanians, who are living today on the territory of ancient Illyria, came there from the territory of the Roman Province of Moesia Superior (in the present-day Serbia) and especially from the valley of the River of Morava which is now the territory of the Eastern Serbia – i.e., the ancient Illyrians cannot be the ancestors of the present-day Albanians.

The last point deserve more attention. As the territory of the Province of Moesia Superior was in the ancient times the zone of Dacian ethnicity, the modern Albanians can be only of the Dacian ethnical origin, but not of the Illyrian one. In this case, however, the Albanians are of the same ethnical origin like the modern Romanians. Such conclusions are supported by the following facts: 1) Illyrian toponyms from the time of ancient Greeks and Romans are not in accordance with the Albanian phonetic laws; 2) most ancient Latin loanwords in the Albanian language have the phonetic form of the eastern Balkan type of the Latin language that is showing that the Albanians are descendent from the ancient Dacians; 3) the most part of terminology in the Albanian language, which is in connection to the expression of littoral terms, is borrowed from different languages what suggests that the Albanians have not been originally a coastal people; 4) only a few ancient Greek loanwords exist in modern Albanian language; if Albanians of Illyrian origin were really indigenous population in Epirus region there should be much more loanwords from the ancient Greek language; 5) there is no any reference to the Albanians on the present-day Albania's territory in any medieval historical source before the 9th century[54]; and 6) around one hundred words from the Romanian language are similar only to the words from the Albanian language. It suggests that the Albanians came to the present-day Albania either from the present-day Romania or from the territory of Serbia that is close to Romania.[55]

The Albanian language was passing through the process of development during the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries - the time when the proto-Romanian language was formed. According to some scholars, the Romanian language should be seen as the Romanized Dacian-Moesian language, while the Albanian language is a semi-Romanized Dacian-Moesian language.[56]

It has to be said that the arguments for the Dacian origin of the Albanians have strong points and they deserved to be seriously taken into consideration by the scholars. The Albanians did not have a single ancestor in some of the pre-South Slavic Balkan peoples. The present-day Albanians, likewise other modern Balkan peoples, are ethnically mixed and composed by an admixture of their main ancestor with the ancestries of the modern South Slavic, Greek and Romanian people. The pivotal purpose of supporters of the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnical origin was to underline that the Albanian historical rights in the Balkans are the oldest and strongest ones in comparison with their neighbors: the Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonian Slavs and Greeks. However, either the Dacian theory, or the theory of admixture of Albanian ethnical roots, argues that Albanian historical rights in the Balkans are not older than historical rights of their neighbors. This theoretical-scientific question of Albanian ethnical derivation greatly influenced the creators of the Balkan states' borders during the Balkan Wars 1912–1913 and also had serious implications for the fixing of the borders of an independent Albanian state in 1912−1921. In the other words, either the Northern Epirus will become a part of Albania or Greece, the Western Macedonia, Kosovo and Metohija parts of Serbia or Albania and the Eastern Montenegro with the Scodra Lake and the city of Scodra will become parts of Albania or Montenegro, highly depended on the question whose historical rights to these lands were stronger. By using the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis, many of Albanian national workers, scholars and politicians claimed that, for instance, the so-called Greek province of the Northern Epirus actually had to be considered as the Southern Albania and as such to be included into the united national state of all Albanians.[57]

[54] Similarly, the Hungarian historians and linguists are stressing that the Romanian theory of Romanian ethnical origin from the ancient Dacians is unjust. The Hungarians are arguing that the Vlachs (or the Romanians as it is regarded in Romanian historiography) arrived in the 12th century when the name of Vlach was mentioned for the first time in historical sources. This opinion is primarily based on "the highly ideological *Gesta Hungarorum* of the unknown cleric Anonymus three-hundred years after the events recorded [i. e., the Magyar settlement in the Pannonia and Transylvania] splendid victories over fictitious chiefs of the peoples 'found here' by the Magyars, actually projecting the twelfth-century status quo onto the ninth" [Kontler L., *Millenium in Central Europe. A History of Hungary*, Budapest: Atlantisz Publishing House, 1999, p. 43]. Contrary to their Hungarian colleagues, the Romanian historians and linguists developed the "Dacian-Vlach" theory of Romanian ethnical origin suggesting that the ancient Dacians were proto-Romanians. As a result, the modern Romanians are considered as original settlers in Transylvania and they have stronger historical rights to this territory than the Hungarians who came there just in the 10th century (for example, see: [Bolovan I. and others, *A History of Romania*, Iaşi, 1996, pp. 46–63]).

[55] The Romanian philologist Vasila Parvan launched a hypothesis in 1910 that the proto-Albanians left their original territories in the Carpathians between the 3rd and the 6th century A.D. and moved to the Balkans through Transylvania. The Romanian linguist Theodor Capidan was sure in 1922 that the Albanians formerly lived somewhere in the northern part of the Balkan Peninsula [Capidan Th., *Dacoromania*, II, Bucharest, 1922, p. 487]. The Greek linguist Philippides thought that the Albanian motherland was ancient Roman Province of Pannonia (all citations taken from [Çabej E., "The problem of the autochthony of Albanians in the light of place-names", *Buletini i Universitetit Shteteror te Tiranes*, № 2, 1958, pp. 54–62].

[56] Georgiev V., "The Genesis of the Balkan Peoples", *Slavonic and East European Review*, 44, № 103, 1966, pp. 285–297; Fine J., *The Early Medieval Balkans*, Ann Arbor, 1994, pp. 10, 11.

[57] That term Northern Epirus has to be understood as the Southern Albania suggests and American scholar: Stickney E. P., *Southern Albania or Northern Epirus in European International Affairs: 1912–1923*, Stanford, 1926. In the *Appeal of the Central Committee for the defense of the rights of the Albanian nationality addressed to all patriots to defend the Albanian lands which are threatened with annexation by Montenegro* (Istanbul, May, 30, 1878), the Committee demanded that the Albanians should be left to their lands: "Through the press and local committees, we have distributed your protest against the pretensions of the Greek Government towards Southern Albania, or Epirus, which is a component

8. Conclusion: Understanding Albanian Nationality and Political Consequences

The Albanian nationhood was understood in the 19th century romanticist notion of the nationality, i.e., Albanians were the Balkan people whose mother tongue was Albanian regardless on confessional division of Albanian people into three denominations (Islamic, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox). Within the north Albanian tribes, especially among the Miriditi, the Roman Catholic Church was very influential. The Roman Catholic Church became in the first place the principal vigilante of the language, cultural heritage and national identity of the Albanians in the Northern Albania.[58] The expression of common sense of the Albanian nationhood was uttered by Albanian political leadership in the years of the Balkan Wars 1912–1913 in the following slogan: "Neve Shqiptar nuk jemi Greke, Sllav, or Teerk, neve jemi Shqiptar" ("We Albanians are not the Greeks, Slavs, or Turks, we are the Albanians").

The Albanian political "methodology" from the time of the First Priznen League in 1878 till the Balkan Wars in 1912−1913 was applied to prepare unification of all "ethnically Albanian territories" in the Balkans into (a "Greater") Albania - a single national state of all Albanians, i.e., within the ethnic borders demanded by the League in the years of its existence from 1878 to 1881. Essentially similar national-state concepts were also included in political programs of the Albanian Peja (Pejë) League, from 1899, the Greater Albanian Kosovo Committee, from 1920, and the Second Prizren League, from 1943. Shortly, preservation of the traditional, common law and local community as the organizational basis of the national movement followed by the demand for unification of all territories populated by Albanians became Albanian primary national interest from 1878 onward.

Clearly, the process of creation of Albanian nationality was not finished yet at the end of the 19th century. The Albanian nation was not considered as a political reality in Europe by many politicians at that time. The Albanian people were among the last one in Europe to build up their own national identity and national community. When during the sessions of the Congress of Berlin in 1878 the question of Albania and Albanians was put on the agenda, the German Chancellor (Kanzzelar) Otto von Bismarck decisively rejected to speak about it with the explanation that there was no Albanian nationality.[59] For him, the Albanians were the Turks. At the same period of time, the Serbs (either from Serbia or from Montenegro) and the Greeks considered themselves as a nation (i.e., ethnical groups which had its own state organizations), and as such were understood by Europe, while the Albanians were understood as the Balkan ethnical group (i.e., the group of people who did not have its own state). Consequently, ethnical group of Albanians could live only as ethnical minority included into some of the Balkan national state(s) and can not expect more than the right to autonomy within it (them). All in all, at the turn of the 20th century many politicians in Serbia, Montenegro and Greece shared opinion that the ethnical group of Albanians was culturally and politically incapable of a modern national development and above all unable and incompetent to establish and rule their own national state.[60] The backwardness of development of Albanian society at the beginning of the 20th century was seen from the fact that initiated process of modernization shook the Albanian tribal society, but failed to replace it with a modern industrial, parliamentary and civil society. The Albanian national movement was seen as well as archaic social movement that cannot reach a level of national cohesion in modern terms. This movement produced among the Serbs, Montenegrins and Greeks a feeling of jeopardizing the political and territorial integrity of Serbia, Montenegro and Greece.[61] For them, the theory

part of our country like Central and Northern Albania". Further, "the Central Committee will make every effort to defend the rights of Albanian nationality in Northern Albania before European public opinion and diplomacy as it has done already for the same reasons in Epirus", "Live the Albanian lands to Albanians!" [*The Archives of the Institute of History of Republic of Albania*, Tirana, Fund of the Albanian League of Prizren, file № 2, document № 5523]. This proclamation is published as a leaflet in Albanian and Italian. The English language translation of the document can be found in: [Pollo S., Pulaha S. (eds.), *Acts of the Albanian National Renaissance, 1878–1912*, Tirana, 1978, pp. 18–19].

[58] Draškić S., "Nadmetanje Austro-Ugarske i Italije koncem XIX i početkom XX veka u Albaniji", *Albansko pitanje u novoj istoriji*, III, Beograd: Marksistička misao, 2-1986, pp. 129–132. See also: [Starova G., "The Religion of the Albanians in the Balkan European Context", *Balkan Forum*, Skopje, vol. 1, № 4, 1993, pp. 201–204].

[59] Logoreci A., *The Albanians. Europe's Forgotten Survivors*, Colorado, 1977, p. 41.

[60] Such approach can be understood as old theory, which was used during the Balkan Wars 1912–1913 to justify Serbian conquering of the Northern Albania, Greek occupation of the Southern Albania and Montenegrin military taking over the city of Skadar/Scutari [Туцовић Д., *Србија и Албанија, један прилог критици завојевачке политике српске буржоазије*, Београд, 1913, pp. 177–118].

[61] The Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonian Slavs and Greeks are accusing the Albanian intellectuals and politicians for using the theory of Illyrian-Albanian ethnical, linguistic and cultural continuity for the sake of realizing the political concept of a "Greater Albania" at the Balkans. This concept can not be realized without a radical change of the borders of the Balkan states established in 1912–1913, following two Balkan Wars. Such change of the borders would violate the territorial integrity of Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Greece. In conclusion, the concept of a "Greater" Albania, based among other ideological constructions and on the theory of Illyrian-Albanian ethnogenesis, may serve as a prelude to a Third Balkan War. Regarding the concept and consequences of creation of a "Greater" Albania at the Balkans see, for example: [Čanak J. (ed.), *"Greater Albania". Concept and possible Consequences*, Belgrade: the Institute of Geopolitical Studies, Belgrade, 1998; Borozan Đ., *"Greater Albania"-Origins, Ideas, Practice*, Belgrade: the Institute of Military History of the Yugoslav Army, Belgrade, 1995]. It should be stressed that in addition to Orthodoxy and the so-called St. Sava's spiritual legacy, the province of Kosovo and Metohija (i.e., Serbia proper) is the third pillar of Serbian national identity. Contrary to the Serbian case, Kosovo and Metohija are not of any significance for the Albanian national identity. Regarding the (crucial) importance of Kosovo and Metohija for the Serbs from historical perspective, see: [Самарџић Р. и други, *Косово и Метохија у српској историји*, Београд: Српска књижевна задруга,

of Illyrian-Albanian continuity is in essence a nationalistic ideological construction which became a driving politically-ideological force for Albanian politicians to create, from the Albanian vision, their ethnic borders according to Albanian acquired rights. Geopolitically, this project, from 1878 to the present, demands not only the territories which ethnically and historically belong to the Albanians, but it went beyond them and encompassed the entire Illyrian-Albanian ethnic population, dispersed in different areas over the neighboring Balkan regions: Kosovo and Metohija, southern parts of Central Serbia, Çameria (Greek Epirus and Greek Western Macedonia), western portion of the Republic of Macedonia (the FYROM) and the Eastern Montenegro.[62]

However, contrary to the theory of backwardness of Albanian social development, the Albanian political and intellectual leadership from the turn of the 20th century argued that the Albanians met all conditions required by contemporary political science to be recognized as a nation: 1) they had their separate ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity; 2) the Albanian settlements in the Balkans are compact; 3) the Albanians had a very precisely defined national program; and 4) they posses abilities to build up a community and their own independent state which would be governed by themselves.[63]

The Albanian political and intellectual leadership often were stressing that Albanian people with their own national idea would never be successfully integrated either into Serbian, Montenegrin or Greek societies and states. That is, in addition to numerous and diverse causes, also due to the fact that the Albanians do not belong to the Slavic or Greek linguistic and cultural groups. There is also significant divergence of national development of the Serbs, Montenegrins, Greeks, on the one hand, and the Albanians, on the other. These nations had different kind of the national movements and particularly had and have different sort of the political elite and national ideology, too. However, the Albanian national ideology of the Illyrian-Albanian ethnogenesis was created and still exists as a pure myth in a form of a quasi-scientific political propaganda for the sake of creation of a "Greater" Albania.

Finally, the Albanians surely were among the very few Balkan peoples who managed to find an internal balance between three confessions and to build up the three-confessions national identity: Islam, followed by 70% of Albanian population (primarily from Albania proper, Kosovo and Metohija, the Western Macedonia and the Eastern Montenegro), Eastern Orthodoxy, professed by 20% of Albanians (chiefly from the Southern Albania and the Greek Northern Epirus) and Roman Catholicism, confessed by 10% of the Albanians (mainly from the Northern Albania proper and Kosovo and Metohija).[64] The Illyrian theory of the Albanian ethnogenesis played a crucial role in this management.

The 19th century movement of Albanian national awakening started half of the century later in comparison with the similar process of other Balkan nations and even the whole century in comparison with Central European ones. The cause for this delay was a general national-cultural underdevelopment of the Albanian people who lived under the Ottoman lordship for the centuries without cultural and ideological connections with the Western Europe where the ideology and movement of nationalism emerged and spread up throughout the rest of European continent. Subsequently, the ideas of national identification, national statehood and the concept of historical-ethnical territorial boundaries had been actualized by all Albanian neighbors (the Greeks, Serbs and Montenegrins) earlier than by the Albanian people. When Albanian intellectuals during and after the Great Eastern Crisis 1875–1878 theoretically shaped the thought and concept of Albanian national idea related to the question of fixing Albanian national territories and creating Albanian national state, they faced, and had to struggle with, Serbian, Montenegrin and Greek national conception and thought of their own national statehood. This ideological, political and military fight was focused primarily on the question upon certain "national" soils on the Balkans which should be included either into united Serbia, united Montenegro, united Greece or united Albania: Kosovo and Metohija, Northern Epirus, Western Macedonia, Skadar (Skutari) region in the Northwest Albania and the territories around the city of Ulcinj and the River of Bojana in the Eastern Montenegro. The national program of the First League of Prizren set up the following two ultimate national goals of the Albanians: 1) the national liberation of all Albanians who in majority lived within the Ottoman Empire and in minority in independent states of Serbia and Montenegro; and 2) the creation of a national state of Albanians in which the entire Albanian historical and ethnical territories were to be incorporated into the Greater Albania. This second requirement led the Albanians in the subsequent decades to the open conflict with the neighboring Christian states: Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. The national awakening of the Albanian people in the years of 1878–1912 resulted in establishment of ideology of nationhood and statehood that became in a greater or lesser extent challenged and opposed

1989].

[62] According to the map of United Albania, composed by Ali Fehmi Kosturi and distributed since 1938. Historically, there were two attempts to create a "Greater" Albania: firstly in 1912 supported by Austria-Hungary, and secondly in 1941 with the direct intervention of fascist Italy and the logistic support of the Third Reich. In both cases the concept of "Greater" Albania reasserted the demands by the 1878–1881 Albanian First League of Prizren to create an Albanian state inside alleged Illyrian-Albanian historical-ethnical borders.

[63] Similar arguments refering to Kosovo and Metohija were presented by the Albanian Kosovo intelligentsia in the 1990s during the Kosovo crisis and the war. See, for example: [Maliqi S., "Strah od novih ratnih uspeha", *Borba*, Beograd, September 16th, 1993].

[64] To this very day, the Albanian Muslims are the main corps of the Albanian national movement and nationalism. The concept of "United", or "Greater", Albania, in its original form (from 1878), was under the strong influence of conservative, political Islam.

by all Albanian neighbors today – the Serbs, Greeks, Montenegrins and the Macedonian Slavs.

9. Summary

The Albanians believe to be the last pure and direct descendants of the ancient Illyrians, the Balkan people who lived at this peninsula in the Antique time. Many scholars consider the Albanians as the offspring population of the ancient inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula, either the Pelasgians or the Illyrians, i.e. the population residing in this part of Europe before the Middle Ages. During the mid-19th century and especially after the establishment of the Albanian national-political organization – the First League of Prizren in 1878 the romanticist understanding of the nationhood according to the linguistic principle prevailed among the Albanian intellectuals, particularly among those who were living as the emigrants in Italy (the *Arabëresh*, how the Italo-Albanians called themselves).

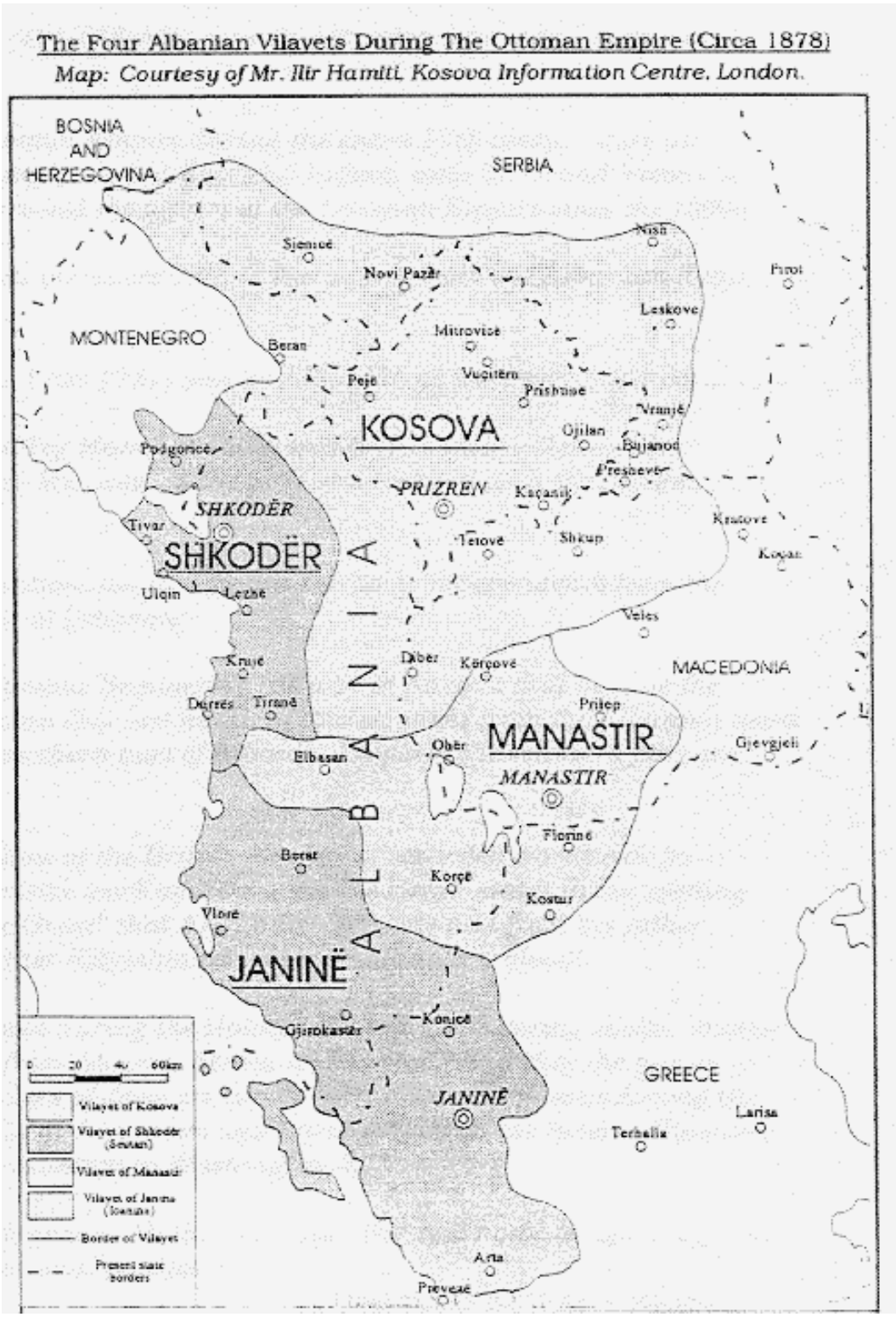
The Albanian national movement *Rilindja* took anti-South Slavic and anti-Greek political-ideological orientation, which at any case cannot be considered as anti-Christian. The Albanian national identity is derived from confrontation with, and from, differences in comparison with their neighbors. The majority of Albanian political workers from the time of *Rilindja* accepted the German-Romanticist principle of "linguistic" nationhood and they created the notion of Albanians that designated an ethnic group whose mother tongue was the Albanian language. However, referring to the linguistic evidences some scholars defend the thesis that the Albanians are descendants of the ancient Dacians who have been inhabiting and the lands south of the River of Danube (the Roman Provinces of Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior) and migrating south-west to the territory of the present-day Albania. Some serious indications refer Albanian ethnical origin to the Dacian-Moesian root. On the first place it is Albanian name for them – the *Shqiptars*, the word of Dacian-Moesian origin, which means the "highlanders" in the Bulgarian language.

However, the proponents of the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis connected the contemporary international name for the Albanians with the *Albanoi* what was the name of an Illyrian tribe living in the present-day North Albania, mentioned for the first time in the works of the Greek geographer Ptolemy in the 2nd century A.D.

The ideology and efforts of the Albanian national movement in the years of 1878–1913 to unify all Albanian Balkan population who lived in compact masses into a single independent ethnically homogenous state of the Albanians jeopardized the idea of territorial integrity of Serbian, Montenegrin and Greek national states. The same is and with the present-day projects to re-create a "Greater" Albania from the time of the WWII.

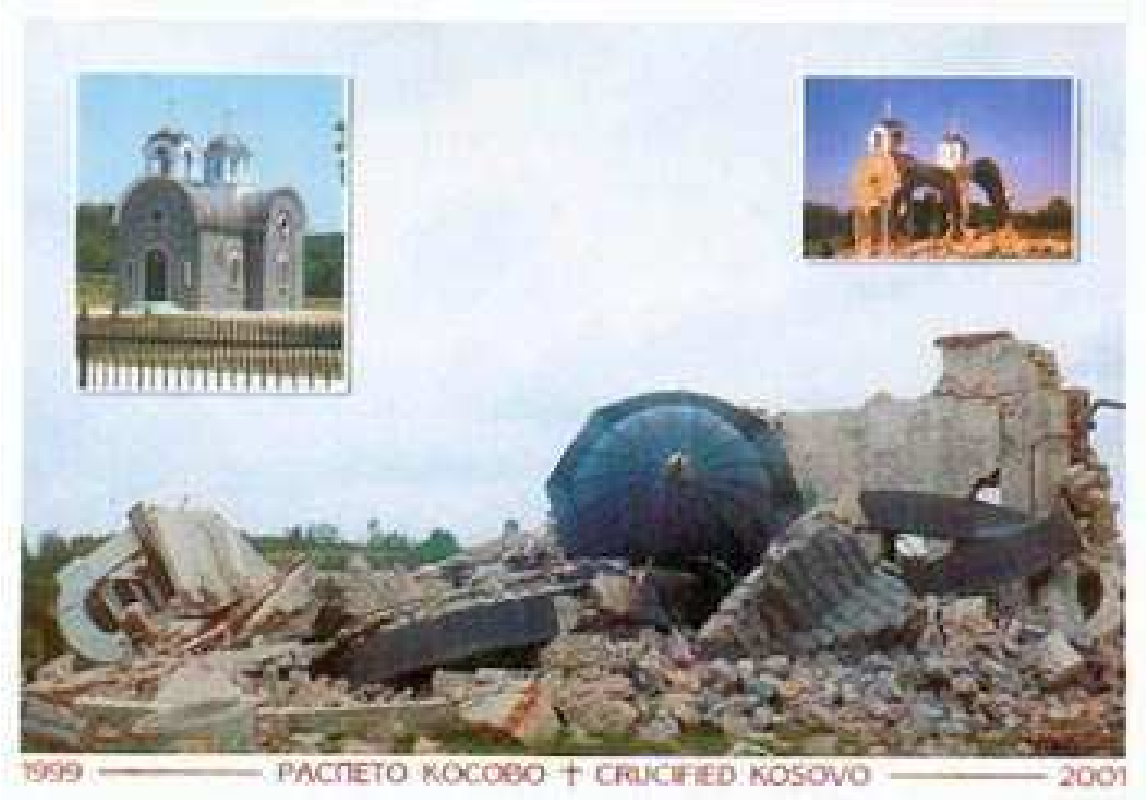
Numerous transformations have been taken place among the Albanians through their historical development, which have resulted in alternation of their real (the Caucasus) ethnical entity. There are no "pure" peoples (nations) in the world and the Albanians are not "pure", either. There is an ethnic substratum that is present in all Balkan peoples (nations). However, it is beyond doubt that the Albanians have retained some of the Illyrian elements in their ethnic make-up for the very reason: they were settled on the Illyrian territory in 1043. But, on the other hand, all the peoples (nations) who live today in the Western and the Central Balkans have Illyrian elements. However, in the other regions of the Western and the Central Balkans, the Slavic element is predominant. Among the Albanians the Latinized Illyrian elements are strong, especially in the point of language. Nevertheless, this fact cannot be utilized by anybody to claim that Albanian historical and ethnical rights on certain Balkan territories are stronger and longer than the Slavic or the Greek ones. In this point, the Illyrian-Albanian cultural-ethnic continuation can gain a new political dimension with the inter-ethnical conflicts in the Balkans, which are already exist, as a "Greater" Albania is in the process of formation (or re-creation). The first Balkan province already *de facto* incorporated into the united national state of the Illyro-Albanians is Kosovo and Metohija.

Appendices



№ 1: *Four "Albanian" vilayets to be united into the so-called "Albanian Vilayet" of the Ottoman Empire and to compose at such a way a Greater Albania (c. 1878)*

№ 2: Map of a Greater Albania promoted by the Albanian diaspora in Sweden in 1977



№ 3: *Destruction of Serbian national traces in Albanian-ruled Kosovo and Metohija after June 1999*

№ 4: *Ancient Cholhis, Iberia and Albania at the Caucasus*

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